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First Acquaintance with the Protectorate

The people are, as I was quick to realise after I had seen and spoken to the tribesman at the Khormaksar races, independent and virile, and later I was to find that they did not lack a sense of humour. In the Highlands they dress, even to this day, in blue cotton kilts which reach to the knee, leaving the upper part of the body bare, except for the vegetable oil and blue dye with which they rub their skin as a protection against the sun in summer and the cold in winter. The kilt is held in place by a leather cartridge belt which in turn supports a dagger, generally with a silver scabbard. A rifle and a pair of leather sandals complete the picture, except in the Colony where rifles and daggers, except for the privileged few, have to be surrendered to authority on entrance, and may not be carried on the person. In the Colony, too, and indeed in the more developed areas of the Protectorate, the blue kilt has given place to brightly coloured kilts made from silk and cotton cloth imported from Indonesia and India, and the blue dye and oil have been replaced by shirts and coats, and indeed, by collars and ties and trousers when the owners have come to this country either on business or for pleasure.

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A TRIBAL GUARDSMAN

[facing p. 114]

2; Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

a rather more inferior donkey, and seemed to hold some sort of quasi-political appointment in the State; he spoke Urdu, which he had learnt during his police service in Aden. He and I conversed together in that language to the irritation of Europeans and Arabs alike who could not understand what we were saying. Perhaps it was as well. The Jemadar and I had quite an amusing time. The rest of the party followed on behind, with the doctor bringing up the rear after the baggage animals, ready to deal with any casualties.

We always started the daily march early in the morning after the lightest of meals and moved steadily forward until midday, when we would halt to rest and feed the animals and ourselves; just before sunset, we would select a camp site among the terraced fields at the side of the valley and a hot meal would be prepared by the cooks, while our servants set up our camp-beds in the open and we relaxed on rugs spread on the bare ground. Sleep came easily.

[361] On the last day as we approached our destination, we could see Al Qara gleaming white far above us on its hilltop and by mid-morning we were near the base of the hill. Just before noon [291] we crossed a small rise and there on the flat ground immediately [302] below the hill thousands of tribesmen were drawn up in lines awaiting our arrival. Blue kilts, indigo-dyed bodies, bobbed [411] hair, rough leather sandals and the inevitable armoury of rifle, cartridge belt and silver sheathed dagger; they were as splendid [643] as they were unexpected in that wild and seemingly sparsely populated country. Sultan Muhammed and I moved forward on foot to greet the Sultan who, dressed in a purple plush frock coat, a blue and yellow striped kilt and a head cloth of the same colours, was busily engaged acting as ringmaster in the midst of this amazing scene. Like his men he carried a rifle, and as we approached welcoming shots were fired by him and his immediate entourage and replied to by his son and my party. The Sultan and I exchanged the customary greeting and shook hands, and then I shook hands with the tribal leaders and walked down the ranks of tribesmen.

Up to this point everything had been remarkably well ordered and controlled, but when the Sultan who was by

8:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1951-52)1954 MM1 Aden MM1

Licensing of Vehicles. £19,756 was collected in fees in 1952 and £15,386 in 1951. The increase was mainly due to the arrival of vehicles in the Colony in connection with the construction of the refinery at Little Aden.

The number of driving licences issued in 1952 was 1,423 compared with 968 in 1951.

Traffic Accidents. There were 384 accidents on the roads of the Colony in 1952 and 242 in 1951. The number of persons killed was 25 in 1952 and 11 in 1951.

Licensing of Arms. Very strict control over the licensing of arms is maintained and licences to possess arms are only issued after the most careful enquiries have been made. An amnesty was proclaimed in October, 1952, advising persons in possession of unlicensed firearms to license them or hand them over to the Police.

PRISONS

General

The Aden Prison is the only penal institution in the Colony and provides accommodation for all convicted offenders, irrespective of age and length of sentence, persons committed to prison on remand, and deportees awaiting deportation. In addition, the prison is declared a place of detention for persons of unsound mind with criminal tendencies.

Approximately 73 per cent of the convicted prisoners come from the Yemen, the Protectorate, and neighbouring territories. Almost all of them are illiterate and very primitive.

Administration of the prison follows the practice adopted in Indian and most colonial prisons and is governed by the Prison Ordinance.

Staff

The prison is under the control of a part-time Superintendent who is assisted by a jailer, an assistant jailer and two clerks. The warders, including instructors, numbered 38.

Prisoners

The total committals to prison was 2,184 in 1952, compared with 1,949 in 1951. The daily average of prisoners of all classes was 179 in 1952 as against 134 in 1951. Prisoners admitted to prison on conviction are divided into two categories, first offenders and recidivists. The percentages of first offenders and recidivists were 54 and 46 respectively.

Discipline

Order and discipline among the prisoners were well maintained during the period.

Health

The general state of health of all prisoners was satisfactory. The daily average sick was 3.2 in 1952, as against 3.3 in 1951. There was no serious illness among the prison inmates during 1952. A Medical